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ABSTRACT

A case study examined the beliefs and theories of a high school social studies teacher and the life experiences he used to explain how he came to hold those beliefs. Examining the teacher's beliefs and theories and also the experiential roots of these theories offers greater potential for illuminating the role of teacher biography in curriculum decisions and the implications of biographical issues for teacher education. Naturalistic inquiry methods of observation and semi-structured interviews were the predominant modes of data collection. The teacher-participant was selected by criterion-based sampling. From data analysis of classroom observation, fragments of his classroom dialogue that appeared to represent a theory or belief were selected and used as talking points during the interviews. The teacher's classroom instruction was consistently reflective of how he portrayed it in the stories and conversations he shared outside the classroom. He talked explicitly about his philosophical stance and the beliefs that formed the framework for his classroom actions. A focus on social issues and problem-centered critical inquiry are key features of social education theory and hallmarks of his practice. He seemed to have a set of strong schema about education, knowledge, learning, and teaching from which to make conscious and principled decisions. It is clear that his personal theories developed from a set of life experiences and were formed in interaction with formally derived theoretical constructs. Contains 34 references. (BT)

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Democracy is Messy: Exploring the Beliefs and Personal Theories of a High School Social Studies Teacher

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The Board of the Philanthropic Society was about to begin deliberations. They had listened as, one by one, the different aid cases made their requests for assistance. There was the father with a family of five, who is an unskilled-laborer and currently unemployed. He was followed by the three orphaned brothers, all under 12 years of age, who were living on the streets. The recently laid-off engineer asked for immediate help with her mortgage so her family is not left homeless, while a paraplegic who can only work part-time due to his chronic pain asks for long term assistance. Then finally, the "eccentric inventor" who just can't seem to maintain a steady job put in his request. As each of the groups made their presentation, the panel asked questions to find out about their need, capacity, and to establish for themselves the issue of who is most deserving of their assistance.

The deliberations began when the first board member presented her argument for assistance, "Well. I think the orphans are the most deserving and have the possibility to have a more positive future if we help." In the corner of the classroom, the "orphans" erupted in applause. "But," she continued, "they may need more help than we can give. I don't think the eccentric creator should get any help. He can work. He just doesn't want to."

Back and forth the deliberations raged as members of the board debated the issues and tried to decide which group to offer assistance. Finally, one of the board members turned to Mr. Franklin, the teacher, and said, "This is hard. I don't like having to make these choices." Another student piped up, "How do you know it will do any good?" In a huff of exasperation, someone else added, "There is just not enough money to help everybody." Mr. Franklin responded, "Isn't this real life? Is there enough money?" He reminded them of their previous discussions about how a democracy requires that citizens make decision about all kinds of political and social issues, and he told them, "These issues are messy. Life is messy, and democracy is particularly messy." (FN, 12-12-96)

You might ask if this is a typical high school social studies class. In fact, you might expect that such instructional practices and curriculum content permeate high schools since this vignette seems to reflect both current views on best practice (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1993), and the critical, independent thinking, reflective inquiry and responsible social criticism advocated by many of the leading theorists in social studies education (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Stanley, 1992; Stanley & Nelson, 1986). However, large scale research data indicates that traditional, textbook-bound practices of knowledge transmission, rather than reflective inquiry, continue to

pervade classrooms across curricular content areas(Cuban, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979). Moreover, studies have shown that social studies teachers tend to be preoccupied with the maintenance of positive student attitudes toward American social and cultural institutions (McNeil, 1986), and thus, hold traditional socialization as their primary goal (Fontana, 1980; McNeil, 1986). Since Mr. Franklin appears to diverge from the norm represented in this data, what accounts for the enacted curriculum in his classroom?

One way to understand curriculum is as the compendium of teacher thinking and doing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Teachers decide what learning experiences the students in their classroom will have, what issues, content, and topics students will engage with, and the instructional materials and methods that will be used. In this respect, teachers serve as gatekeepers (Thornton, 1989) because their pedagogical and curriculum decisions determine their students' access to knowledge and bound their opportunities to learn. Therefore, teachers' thinking and the underlying personal beliefs and theories that form the framework for their classroom decisions-making have wide ranging implications for educational equity and student achievement.

This recognition of the power that teachers wield in their classrooms and the ways in which their curriculum decisions can influence their students' life chances, caused me to begin critically examining my own beliefs about teacher education. I began to wonder about how, and to what extent, pre-service programs could and should assist their students in examining and questioning their world views and pre-

existing beliefs. Thus, I embarked on this case study to examine the beliefs and theories of a high school social studies and the life experiences he used to explain how he came to hold those beliefs. Examining not only the teacher's beliefs and theories but also the experiential roots of these theories offers greater potential for illuminating the role of teacher biography in curriculum decisions and the implications of biographical issues for teacher education.

Conceptual Framework

Recent research has helped illuminate the central role teachers thinking and personal theories play in the curriculum decisions they make (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Cronin-Jones, 1991; Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992; Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1980). Such research as helped us understand teachers as active curriculum agents (Miller & Seller, 1985) and has provided a more robust understanding of the dynamic and flexible ways that teachers approach the contextually bound complexity and ambiguity of daily teaching, learning, and curriculum decision-making.

Studies conducted by Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin (1985) have been central to the development of the notion of teacher personal practical knowledge. Elbaz 's (1983) seminal study changed the way the research community conceptualized teacher thinking. Drawing on a study of five teachers, she determined that teacher thinking embodied far more than cognitive knowledge. It also encompassed the knowledge derived from practice. She argued that teachers' practical knowledge, as she called it, embodied rules of practice, practical principles, and images of teaching

which individual teachers used in personalized and distinct ways as they confronted the unique and varied "problems" of daily life in classrooms. Through her study, Elbaz (1983) reframed teacher knowledge as a dynamic, interactive process and thus recast the role of teacher from a passive implementor of externally derived curriculum to one of an active, autonomous creator in the curriculum process.

Clandinin (1986) built on the framework developed by Elbaz (1984) by investigating the construct of teacher images. Through interviews with teachers and by observing them in action in the classroom, Clandinin (1983) determined that teachers have a fairly well delineated, although not articulated, set of ideas regarding their purposes and intentions in the classroom. 'Similarly, Sanders and McCutcheon described teachers' practical theories as "the conceptual structures and visions that provide teachers with reasons for acting as they do....They are principles or propositions that undergird and guide teachers' appreciations, decision, and actions" (as cited in Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992, pp. 54-55).

Personal theories, then, can be understood as the schemata (Anderson, 1984) that structure one's knowledge and understanding of the world, and provide the practical knowledge and inference structures necessary for performing necessary tasks. The schemata that constitute teachers personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1985; Clandinin & Connelly, 1988) and personal theories and philosophies (Cornett, 1990) develop from teachers' lived experiences. Clandinin (1986) offered insight into the biographical nature of teacher theories when she described them as the, "knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that

make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person's experiential history both professional and personal" (1985, p. 362). Since then, researchers have begun to investigate more closely the connection of teachers' biographical experiences to their beliefs about teaching, learning, and content issues (e.g. Knowles, 1992; Powell, 1992, 1996; Shuell, 1992). These studies have demonstrated the profound influence that life experiences such as prior career and work experiences (Powell, 1992, 1996), and college curriculum and course work in a major area (Shuell, 1992) have on teachers' curriculum orientations and constructions of content knowledge. Other research has also illustrated the influence that other biographical characteristics, such as ethnic background, social class origins, and gender issues, can have on teacher's instruction (Raymond, Butt, & Townsend, 1991).

This body of research provides a framework for understanding teachers' personal practical theories as the compendium of convictions, beliefs, and practices about teaching and learning that are derived from the totality of teachers' lived experiences, and that serve as both a filter and a frame of reference for curriculum and implementation decisions. However, what also has been clearly demonstrated in the literature is the implicit nature of these theories (Cornett, 1990; Evans, 1990).

Case studies of social studies teachers conducted by Evans (1989, 1990) and Cornett (1990) indicate that often teachers are not aware of their personal theories (Cornett, 1990) and philosophical stances (Evans, 1990). Using data collected from classroom observations and interviews with five teachers and a sample of students

from each classroom, Evans (1990) determined that teacher conceptions of history were related to competing ideological orientations and these conceptions influenced the pedagogical approaches of the teachers. While their conceptions varied, Evans (1990) concluded that overall the teachers' philosophies generally remained "unexamined and unarticulated" by the participants (p.127).

Cornett (1990), sought to make explicit the personal practical theories of one high school socials studies teacher. Using field-based, naturalistic inquiry methods, Cornett (1990) illuminated five of the teacher's personal theories and two sub-theories. He concluded that not all of the teacher's theories remained constant over various classroom situations and were, thus, arrayed in conflicting theoretical frameworks. Nevertheless, it was apparent that these theories guided her decision making about curriculum and instruction. Finally, much as the history teachers in Evans (1990) study, this teacher had no explicit knowledge of her personal practical theories and their framework, although Cornett (1990) did indicate that through the process of the research, the teacher participant had increased her reflective capacity.

These two studies confirm the central role that teachers' personal beliefs (Cornett, 19900), and conception of their content area (Evans, 1990), play in determining the content, instructional experiences, and knowledge to which students are exposed. The studies also clearly illuminate the problematic issue that the personal practical theories (Cornett, 1990) and philosophical stance (Evans, 1990) of teachers often remain tacit and unexamined. The apparent lack of consciously derived curricular and instructional action by the teachers in these studies raises

great concern given the gatekeeping role of teachers (Thornton, 1989). The concerns of student access to knowledge and equity compel the continued investigation of teacher personal theories in classroom settings. Moreover, though there has been growing interest in the role of biographical experiences in studies of teacher theories (Knowles, 1992; Powell, 1992, 1996; Shuell, 1992), there has been little work within the social studies research community around these issues. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to expand on the previous research on teacher personal theory within the context of social studies education by exploring the practice and personal theories of a high school social studies teacher and the personal and educational experiences this teacher identified as being salient in the development of his philosophy and personal theories.

Methodology

Naturalistic inquiry methods of observation and semi-structured interviews were the predominant modes of data collection used in this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These methods allow for a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1968) and are frequently used in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1988).

The teacher- participant, Mr. Franklin, was selected by criterion-based sampling (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). I had known Mr. Franklin in graduate school where, as a pre-service teacher education student, he consistently expressed his preference for inquiry-based pedagogical practices and identified himself as a "social educator". In the fall of 1995, I initiated a research study with the teachers in the high school social studies department in which Mr. Franklin taught. During the course of

this larger study, I observed Mr. Franklin's classroom and noted, as highlighted in the introductory vignette, that his instructional practices and curriculum appeared to match his previously stated preferences and contrast with the teaching described by Cuban (1984), Goodlad (1984), and Shaver, Davis, and Helburn (1979). Intrigued by what I saw, I approached Mr. Franklin at the beginning of the next academic year about initiating this secondary line of inquiry. Thus, during the academic year of 1996-97, I conducted this study concurrently with the original, larger study.

From mid-August, 1996 until May, 1997, I made regular visits to the site. Working within the academic calendar of the school, this generally consisted of weekly visits. However, some months, due to scheduling conflicts, I was only able to arrange two visits. Data for this study was collected on alternating weeks. During these visits, I observed Mr. Franklin's elective classes which included a state studies course, Global Issues, and a newly designed freshman course that he collaboratively taught with three other department colleagues. I selected these two classes for this study because the student populations were more heterogeneous and better represented the broader demographics of the school regarding race, socio-economic status, and students receiving special education services. Also, these were the classes where Mr. Franklin had more discretion and autonomy for selecting content.

Data sources included field notes from 12 hours of classroom observations, notes from informal, field-based interviews that were not tape recorded, and transcripts from two semi-structured interviews. I also collected and reviewed

artifacts such as class handouts, teacher readings and resources, and a video tape of student groups' culminating projects, as well as other forms of student work. I used the observations in the classroom and collaborative document analysis as a means for exploring the enactment of the teacher's theories and beliefs in the classroom setting, and as the "jumping off place" for the unstructured interviews. The data from these field-based, informal interviews were collected as field notes.

Recognizing that language forms and discourse patterns shape classroom culture (Cazden, 1988) and are manifestations of beliefs and theories (Bruner, 1986) these were my primary focus during classroom observations. I attempted to gather exact dialogue from the students and teacher during the classes. However, I gave priority to me teacher's words and statements as a way of understanding how he framed the work of knowledge construction in the classroom. Analysis of the data was on-going (Maxwell, 1996) and consisted of reading the field notes and making marginal comments. I aggregated the comments and initially sorted them into emerging categories of beliefs and practices. As new data were collected, I annotated and analyzed the notes for either inclusion in the categories, or to identify or suggest alternative categories or themes, as well as to look for disconfirming data. Such an inductive process is typical of a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1968), and frequently used in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1988).

From my analysis of data from the classroom observations, I selected fragments of his classroom dialogue that appeared to represent a theory or belief and used them as talking points during the semi-structured interviews. In this way, I was

able to elicit both his reflection on his actions and thinking in the classroom context and the beliefs that undergird those decisions, as well as his reflections on how he developed those beliefs. I analyzed the data from the transcripts using the established codes and categories to continue the process of identifying Mr. Franklin's extant beliefs and theories. When it appeared I had saturated the data (Glasser & Strauss, 1968), I presented the data analysis in the form of "working" conceptual framework of his theories to him, and shared the selected vignettes I felt reflected those theories. During this discussion of the data, Mr. Franklin expressed that he felt I had accurately captured both the feel of his classroom and his most important beliefs.

Findings

Although the study sought to make explicit Mr. Franklin's personal theories, prior research has indicated that there is often a discrepancy in the way teachers describe their practice, what they say their beliefs are, and their actual classroom practices. Therefore, I deemed necessary to look first at Mr. Franklin's classroom practices as a way to begin exploring his personal theories. During my first four visits to Mr. Franklin's classroom I focused closely on observing the classes and capturing the events as carefully as possible. In the field notes of these observations I described in detail the room arrangement, student seating arrangements, the lesson activities and content, and the interactions Mr. Franklin had with the students, particularly the dialogue. During these visits I did not engage Mr. Franklin in any conversation about what I had observed. I did this intentionally so that I could focus

only on the dialogue and interactions in the classroom as I conducted my initial data analysis. This interim analysis of the field notes yielded three cluster of that suggested underlying theories and beliefs: classroom culture, instructional strategies, and social studies content. These strands of practice coalesce in Mr. Franklin's pedagogical practices in a way that is more intricately woven than might be implied by attempting to look at the parts separately. Nevertheless, the categories were useful as a heuristic tool for examining his theories through the lens of his enacted curricular practices.

Instructional Practices

Classroom Culture

My first visit occurred during the opening days of school and provided the opportunity to observe how Mr. Franklin introduced himself and the course to students, and set classroom expectations. Over the course of the academic year, I actually observed four instances of these types of "first day" classes. During every one of these introductory class sessions, Mr. Franklin wove together his expectations for student interactions and opinion sharing, with his rationale for why he organized the class as he did. These days were also filled with Mr. Franklin's self-disclosure about his own school and life experiences, and his hopes for how the students' experiences might be different. Mr. Franklin's introduction during the first day of the Global Issues class provides a rich, yet typical example:

> To learn, you have to try. That means everything we will do. Get engaged and participate. I think this class is very fun. We have no textbook. You don't have to memorize a bunch of stuff to regurgitate. Everybody has ideas and has an opinion. All you have to learn is how to share those in a manner that does not

> offend or harm someone. For example, if Jim shares his opinion and Molly laughs, will Jim want to talk again? No. I place great emphasis on the fact that we all need to respect each other. That doesn't mean we can't disagree or debate and discuss those issues we disagree on. We just need to make sure they remain discussions and not bashing. Sometimes I will give you another viewpoint if it is not one that has been put out there by you all. This does not mean it is mine. I just want you to hear how others might view an issue (FN, 1-6-97).

During each of these "first days," Mr. Franklin also had each student share about him or herself, his or her interests outside of school, and specific expectations for the class. As the students talked, he would ask them questions to probe their answers and to learn more about them. When a student explained that he had wanted to take the world civilization course but it was closed, Mr. Franklin offered a way that the student's interests might fit the class. He told him that, the Global Issues class took a broad look at social studies issues, "so perhaps some of the things you are interested in from world civilizations will be areas for us to learn in here" (FN, 8-19-96).

One pervasive aspect of Mr. Franklin's practices that was particularly evident during these first days, was his self-disclosure and sharing about himself. He continuously shared with students his general concerns about local or national social and political issues, and his own actions to address those concerns. One week when he attended a planning and zoning meeting, he told the students about it the next day. He also told them about his work as a precinct clerk for the elections board. Moreover, he frequently shared with them his experiences in school when he was their age:

> It has always been my view of school, especially when I was there, when I was

> your age, that school usually hasn't done well for anybody. Now, many of you are good at it, but I don't think it served anyone of us well. When I was a student, I felt then like we were cattle shuffled from class to class where we sat listening to some man or woman babble on and trying to figure out what I would have to memorize for the test (FN, 1-6-97).

Instructional Strategies and Content

Mr. Franklin's self-disclosure about his personal experiences and critique of school served a dual purpose. They offered a space in the classroom for students to share their own experiences, ideas, and critiques, as well as being Mr. Franklin's vehicle for explaining to students the organization of the course, for example why he used simulations and projects, and structured the content around current social and political issues. For this teacher, the issues of instructional strategy and content cannot be easily extricated and are best presented together.

Student research, simulations and projects, as well as large and small group discussion were the predominate instructional practices in Mr. Franklin's repertoire because they lent themselves to problem-posing and inquiry learning. As he described it to students, the Global Issues class was designed as a simulation-based course that would draw on "information from the real world." Students would be expected to research issues that they were interested in and then bring that learning to a role-play situation, because, as he told them, "That is what you do in the real world. That is what you do in other aspects of your life. Other than in school you do not spend your days taking tests or memorizing stuff" (FN, 1-6-97).

However, he recognized that students need to know factual information such as specific content, discipline concepts, and vocabulary in order to "participate fully and

with confidence" in these activities that require critical thinking and "high-level conceptual work" (FN, 1-6-97). He told me later that he always explained to students that these are the, "bare minimum you have to have in order to do the other work of this class" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript). Therefore, Mr. Franklin created a list of vocabulary terms and concepts appropriate to the topic or unit of study. Then, at the outset of the unit, he and the students generated working definitions or in other ways established what they already knew from their own experiences, prior lessons, or other courses. These initial definitions could draw on any knowledge source students had, or possible definitions for a word drawn from another discipline area.

For example, one unit from the introductory Social Studies I course explored the concepts of the rights and responsibilities of U. S. citizens. In small collaborative groups, he asked the students to generate a definition of what responsibility meant. He told them, "I want you own words, not a textbook definition. What does responsibility mean to you" (FN, 8-19-96). Once students completed this step, Mr. Franklin engaged the whole class in a discussion focused on helping the students link their current understandings and definitions to how the concept or word is typically used within the social science. In this way, he served as a bridge between their experientially constructed understandings and that of the accepted knowledge of the discipline.

Along with learning the discipline-based vocabulary, facts, data and skills within the social studies, the curriculum in Mr. Franklin's classes observed during this investigation consisted of content and perspectives that are often absent in the

textbooks. The content also frequently included local connection to larger national or international events, or issues. Some of the topics the students explored in the courses included, sustainable development, human rights, state literature and authors, and political attitudes. For example, in the Global Issues class students worked with graphs, maps, primary documents and statistical charts to self-assess their knowledge about development issues. Mr. Franklin asked them to match five countries on a map with listing of national statistics including, infant mortality rates, life expectancy, per capita income, and gross national product. Then, the students spent the six-week unit investigating these factors in relation to various parts of the world and their local community.

In another of his elective classes, the topic of the unit of study was the history of slavery in the state. The students used a copy an 1871 petition to the state congress, including a listing of 116 acts of violence committed against Blacks, asking for more vigilant protection of the rights of Black citizens. The students plotted the acts of violence on a state map in the county where it occurred, looking for a pattern. They then used the map to determine where in the state the violence had been most prevalent and hypothesized what might be a likely explanation for the distribution of this violence against the Black citizens. From their analysis of the map, they determined that the most violence occurred in "the rich counties" which were the "biggest hemp and tobacco producing counties," and since these areas had had the "highest number of slaves, there were higher numbers of freedmen living there after the war" (FN 10-24-96).

Based on this activity, the students and Mr. Franklin engaged in a discussion of post-Civil War society, the attitudes and actions of Whites, and the continued, pervasive nature of racism in the state, including the modern history of lynchings through the 1970s in the South. As in other discussions in his classes, students shared their insights and stories from their own life to illuminate a point, bring an alternative perspective, or in some other way add their knowledge to the classroom. In this instance, a White male student shared a story of his grandmother's experience as a child. He told the class how her father, his great-grandfather, was a "Night Rider", and once he and his group had lynched a Black man for something that they later found out he had not done. It was a piece of local history that neither Mr. Franklin nor the other students had ever known about, yet this young man's family story brought the conversation to a much deeper, personal level for them all.

Mining Classroom Practice for Personal Theories

As noted earlier, I focused during the initial weeks of the study on capturing Mr. Franklin's classroom practice. After the fourth visit, we scheduled an interview. To initiate our discussion, I selected representative quotes from the emerging themes I had identified in his practice. These themes and the representative quotes appeared to suggest four clusters of personal theories regarding the aim of education, the origin of knowledge, the nature of learning, and his images of teacher. Building on this conversation starter, I included explicit questions regarding his beliefs and theories, and the life experiences he felt gave rise to those beliefs. Subsequent observations and a second interview provided opportunities to gain further insights

into Mr. Franklin's practice and thinking as a means of further exploring and confirming these personal theories.

While Mr. Franklin may have numerous other theories which guide his practice, four theories were consistently evident in both his classroom actions and in his reflections during the interviews. They are as follows:

- The aim of education is the development of active, critical citizens.
- Knowledge has multiple sources, truths, and perspectives.
- Learning is an active process that must include meaningful experiences and personal, respectful, trusting relationships.
- The teacher has an ethical obligation to be a real person to students and a role model.

Aim of Education

For Mr. Franklin, the aim of education was the development of active, critical citizenship. As he emphasized in the interview, he saw teaching as being,

> About citizenship and inherent in that is making things better. I see myself as giving them the skills to do that. Not, this is the way you should feel. This is the value you should have. [Rather], this is how you do it. Not sitting on your butt. Not just voting and saying I'm a citizen. Not knowing what is going on in the world. I see my classes giving them not just the skills, but probably more important the confidence to go out there and be a citizen (From 9-25-96 interview transcript).

In order for students to be the active, participating citizens he envisions, he believed they need to actively engage with a variety of ideas and perspectives and that was the reasoning behind his focus on instructional practices such as simulations, role-plays, and student initiated inquiry. It was also why he says he focused on

current social and political issues. As he pointed out,

> If you do not know what is going on, you can't make decisions. You can't do much of anything. You are so limited. It is like Let's Make a Deal. Most people don't have all the choices because they don't have enough information. So, they are picking the same door all the time. For the most part it is the wrong door. That is why we are here. It is not for any facts in a textbook, that is the basic stuff. They don't need a teacher for that.... That is not creating an educated citizen (From 9-25-96 interview transcript).

Origin of Knowledge

Mr. Franklin believed that active, critical citizenship requires an individual to be able to deal with and make sense of the multiple truths that make up knowledge in a diverse, democratic society. As he told the students, "democracy is messy" and so they needed to know about and learn to be comfortable with the multiple perspectives and knowledge structures inherent in the nation's diversity. He understood knowledge as being derived from multiple, sometimes competing, sources, including the experiences his students bring with them to the class. Therefore, he believed the curriculum and instructional practices should provide opportunities for students to grapple with the messiness of life by sharing and exploring their own prior thinking and experiences and questioning knowledge from multiple sources. As he explained it,

> I am trying to show them there are all kinds of truths to all kinds of answers.... But, they can't even play the game, they are not even in the game if they are not exposed to all these different views. To the extent that a view is not being made, as hard as it is, I have to make it (From 9-25-96 interview transcript).

Further, as evident in the highlights of his practice presented previously, Mr. Franklin was not the sole bearer of knowledge in his classroom. He continually provided space for students to share their experiences, personal and family stories,

and prior or current understanding of an issue. Moreover, Mr. Franklin's consistent use of primary documents, the low reliance on a textbook, the incorporation of current issues, and his attention to including the experiences, writings, and perspectives of individuals from different ethnic groups presented students with a complexity and diversity of ideas with which to construct and understand social and historical knowledge.

The Nature of Learning

The nature of learning is the third distinct area of Mr. Franklin's theoretical framework. Evident in his classroom practice was Mr. Franklin's concern for developing a classroom culture where students know each other and their teacher, and treat each other with respect. Being respectful of students was about recognizing that they came with experiences and knowledge that were valuable to the educational process. It was also a recognition that they were real people with varied interests, multiple responsibilities and roles.

Mr. Franklin was emphatic about the importance of the teacher-student relationship in learning. He thought that deep learning could not occur without a positive, trusting relationship, imbued with mutual respect. This was one reason he shared his own schooling and life experiences, and why he created the ritual of the "first day" to get to know his students. Further, he saw the high-level content and issues-based curriculum of his class as a manifestation of his respect for students and their intellect. As he explained it,

> I treat them the same way I would treat someone if I were in the faculty lounge. That is the way I see it. We are talking about issues in my class. These are

> important. So what you are only fourteen. Big deal (From 1-21-97 interview transcript).

Evidence of Mr. Franklin's success at building a strong relationship with students was a response that a student gave on a school survey. She wrote that if she were a teacher she would, "be like Mr. Franklin, because he treats us like we are real people" (FN, 1-15-97).

Image of the Teacher

Embodied within the theory of trusting relationships is Mr. Franklin's fourth theory regarding what it means to be a teacher. For Mr. Franklin, a teacher was to be first a role model of active citizen and human being, especially since he held these as his own aims of education. In an interview he explained,

> I just try to be a role model and tell them what I am doing. I don't mean [as a way] to brag, because I don't think most of these kids think what I do is anything cool or neat. They think it is stupid that I gave up a job in real estate to be in this classroom in the first place. But, you are just a role model that there is a world out there (From 9-25-96 interview).

Part of being a role model was also about being a real person. Therefore, Mr. Franklin's explicit attention to sharing with his students his own experiences as a student and an adult community member, served not only as a framework for developing a relationship, they also helped him seem more real to students. Through his shared stories of being a teenager and an adult he believed he helped provide a real example of the link between those eras of a person's life.

Experiences in the Construction of Personal Theory

During each of the two interviews I conducted with Mr. Franklin, I asked him to reflect upon his life experiences and try to identify those he felt had most influenced

his instructional practice and beliefs about teaching. During these reflections, he identified three loci of experiences that represent social institutions which are often central to a person's socialization: family, K-12 schooling, and professional education. One's experiences within these institutions tends to be longitudinal, taking place over many years and various events. Mr. Franklin's identification of these influencing experiences, thus, dealt more with a succession of related experiences within these institutions, rather than specific events. However, Mr. Franklin did specifically identify a few specific critical incidents and people in his life that he felt were highly significant influences.

When I asked him to reflect on the experiences he felt influenced his beliefs, he began by talking about high school. He identified four teachers, two "very strong" social studies teachers and two English teachers who he said were the only ones "who challenged me to think. They threw the book out the window" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript). In explaining the influence they had on him, Mr. Franklin pointed to the instructional and curricular practices of the social studies teachers in particular.

He credited his World Civilization teacher with opening up "this big world to me" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript). He noted that he did not recollect studying western Europe in that class. Rather, they studied the world, unlike, he pointed out, the other students at his school who were only getting western European history from the textbook. This teacher had a love of China and other east Asian cultures that she enthusiastically shared by making it part of the course curriculum. In doing so, she engaged Mr. Franklin's interest in these non-traditional aspects of history and gave

him other lenses for looking at the world.

The second social studies teacher he recollected by name and that she had taught a class called Problems of Democracy. In remembering this, he commented, "Can you imaging having a class called that today?" (From 9-26-96 interview transcript), seemingly amazed at the issued-based content inferred by the class name. Mr. Franklin remembered that in that class the teacher and the students discussed the daily effects of politics in their lives, and it is from this class that he has patterned his elective courses.

Both these teachers seemed to have influenced him with respect to his content focus and selection. However, he explicitly identified the second teacher as being a role model. It is this teacher about whom he frequently talked with students. In one class he told them of the profound effect her class had on him:

> I felt I was a better person for that, not just a better teacher now. Because of those experiences and reading the paper, I was a better real estate broker, a better conversationalist at parties, and most important a better citizen. I thank that women because she helped me be a better person (FN, 9-19-96).

In the interview he spoke admiringly of her involvement in politics and in her community. Her model of active political and civic engagement led him to his first political protest, one of the two specific key events he identified. He talked about that experience as the beginning of his political life and state that he "hasn't stopped since" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript). His personal theory of the teacher as a role model appeared to be directly linked in part to his experiences with this teacher.

Mr. Franklin spoke of his school experiences as being "mostly bad." As noted previously in the data on his classroom practice, he shared his critiques of schooling

with his students. His mechanistic, factory view of the schooling process was also pervasive in his conversation during the field-based and semi-structured interviews. His negative schooling experiences are critical factors in understanding his theories about the aim of education, and the nature of knowledge.

The second locus of experiences Mr. Franklin identified as a lens for understanding his beliefs about teaching was his family. The oldest son of a blue-collar laborer, he was the first in his family to go to college. His life as a child in a working-class family profoundly influenced his political and economic ideology. He stated that he remembered, "Watching my parents, hard working, middle class people. I saw how, not the government, but the system, the economic system, was so hard on them. They were good people but they weren't getting anywhere" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript).

During the first interview, Mr. Franklin made a passing reference to his family's Native American background. However, later when I asked him directly about whether he thought his Cherokee ancestry was important to understanding his practice he replied, "[It] has a lot to do with why I teach history the way I do" (From 1-21-97 interview transcript). This was because, he explained, his family background led him to read a wider variety of literature on the culture and history of the Cherokee and other Indian Nations. Through this wider net he cast, he found more divergent, and complex perspectives and understandings for social, political, and historical issues than he had encountered in the formal curriculum of his K-12 education, and most of his college courses as well.

Along with this general family milieu, Mr. Franklin spoke of a particular event connected to his family's economic status as being a particularly profound influence regarding his teaching practice. His father had been the union organizer at the local factory. Mr. Franklin remembered, with what he felt was unusual clarity, accompanying his father to a strike and standing on the picket line with him at age ten. He spoke in an almost reverential tone about it remarking, "That will be with me forever" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript).

Though Mr. Franklin's family background and his K-12 schooling experiences provide important biographical antecedents for his current teaching theories, he also identified an aspect of his teacher education program as including some important experiences as well. He was very pointed about separating these salient experiences from his program as a whole because he felt that not all the courses and experiences were equally important for him in understanding his beliefs and theories as a teacher. What became evident during this conversation was that the experiences actually centered around a single person, his advisor and social studies methods professor. Through the course of the interview, he explicitly identified her as the single most influential factor in his teacher education program.

He explained that it was his interactions with her, the course work and field-based experiences he completed under her guidance, that was fundamental to understanding his current practice and beliefs. He saw her as having a very clear progressive stance which he felt embodied the core beliefs and understandings about the world, school, and society that he already had developed before he entered

the program. In this way he felt she "validated my beliefs" (From 9-25-96 interview transcript). He shared his story of his initial visit to the university to inquire about the program as an illustration of that validation:

> I came out of the elevator and there was [her] office. There was a map of the western hemisphere "upside-down" and I thought, 'This is home.' If I had walked in, and there had been, I don't know, a bunch of war scenes or something, and it was the typical male history teacher that I had in high school, I think I would have gotten back on the elevator (From 9-25-96 interview transcript).

Mr. Franklin credited her with giving him the "resources and the confidence" to teach in a way that was different from the majority of his own schooling experiences, yet was aligned with his own beliefs about what teaching could and should be. He felt she was a role model of someone who had done that in her own teaching at the university, which he described as rich in multiple perspectives and engaging learning experiences. She also introduced him to the literature and perspectives of Dewey and other social educational theorists. By doing so, she allowed him the opportunity to place his own previously constructed world view and personal theories within this larger theoretical framework. He explained the outcome of this student-teacher relationship as her providing him with a firm grounding for his practice because his work with her told him, "You can do this. This is right."

Discussion

Unlike the social studies teachers in the study by Evans (1990), whose description of their philosophical stances did not match the observed practices, Mr. Franklin's classroom instruction was consistently reflective of how he portrayed it in the stories and conversation he shared outside the classroom. Moreover, in contrast

with the implicit nature of the personal theories presented in studies by Evans (1990) and Cornett (1990), Mr. Franklin was able to talk explicitly about his philosophical stance and the beliefs that formed the framework for his classroom actions. A focus on social issues, and problem-centered, critical inquiry are key features of social education theory and hallmarks of his practice. Thus, his self-identification as a social educator seems warranted.

Although Mr. Franklin had never called his beliefs 'personal theories', he was nevertheless able to clearly articulate what his core values and beliefs were. He was quite aware of these beliefs and articulate about how they affected his approach to teaching, and his curricular and instructional decisions. In this sense, he seemed to have a set of strong schema about education, knowledge, learning, and teaching from which to make conscious and principled decisions. Further, his theories formed an interconnected web, and worked in concert to create a complex conceptual framework.

In this framework, each theory appears to set some parameters within which the others must function. However, these parameter do not appear to be limiting factors. Taken together, they still provide a substantially broad repertoire of curriculum and instructional actions and decisions. Unlike the teacher described in Cornett's (1990) study, there are no competing tensions among his theories. This is not to say that all of his theories carry equal weight within his decision-making. Although his personal theories serve as a rubric for selecting both instructional activities and subject-area content, all of these pedagogical decisions are filtered through his core

belief about the aim of education being the cultivation of active, critically thoughtful citizens for a democracy. In fact, the presence of such a clear and pervasive aim of education is a hallmark of Mr. Franklin's theoretical framework . With this as his fundamental criteria, Mr. Franklin's highly articulated, conscious set of beliefs allows him to "practice without a textbook, " and thus expand his students' access to knowledge.

It is clear that Mr. Franklin's personal theories developed from a set of life experiences, as well as being formed in interaction with formally derived theoretical constructs. One interesting aspect of his personal theory development was the profound affect of his high school years. Lortie (1975) wrote of the "apprenticeship of observation" that future teachers undergo as pupils in schools. He argued that this accounted for the maintenance of traditional practices. However, it would appear that this apprenticeship might also serve to provide "counter socializing" experiences for some future teachers, who, like Mr. Franklin, are provided with alternative experiences by their "non-traditional" teachers who served as role models.

As previous research has demonstrated, personal factors such as social class, ethnicity, and gender (Raymond, Butt, & Townsend, 1991) are important aspects of personal biography that can influence teachers' theories. Thus, Mr. Franklin's identification of his family's working class background and Cherokee ancestry as important lens for understanding his beliefs and curriculum decisions are consistent with these data, and as such are not new findings. Even so, it does serve to remind us of the often take for granted issue that teacher background can have

regarding issues of curriculum decision-making and classroom practice.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the development of Mr. Franklin's personal theories is the significance he gives to the personal relationships he had with teachers and the influence these individuals had on his personal theories and practice. Mr. Franklin singled out two individuals, a high school social studies teacher and his social studies methods professor, as serving as key role models regarding the enactment of teaching and the appropriateness of content for the social studies. It seems that for Mr. Franklin, these two women embody the images of "good social studies teacher" that he strives to be like and enact in his own classroom practices.

Implications and Conclusions

Studies of teacher personal theories, such as this one of Mr. Franklin, continue to illuminate the autobiographical roots and demonstrate the profound influence these theories have for the enacted curriculum in the K-12 classroom. In doing so, they both offer suggestions for teacher education programs and raise questions and concerns that need to be considered carefully with respect to the curriculum and learning experiences of these programs. It is clear that teacher education students enter their program with pre-existing beliefs and theories about schooling, learning, and teaching. So, what is the role of teacher education in illuminating, challenging and critiquing those beliefs and personal theories? Even when they enter a program, as Mr. Franklin did, already predisposed to accept the current epistemological and theoretical perspectives present in the program, should we not provide these challenges? If we agree that such challenges are critical to

becoming a teacher, then how do we provide these experiences without also seeming to disregard or challenge the veracity of the personal experiences that gave foment to those beliefs and ways of knowing the world? Finally, if the exploration of biography becomes a component of teacher education programs, what aspects of students' lives should we have them examine? What life experiences would be most illuminating?

Cognitive research has helped us understand the role that prior experiences have in the development of conceptual structures such as schemata that our brains use to filter and organize sensory input and make meaning form events. This is a rather well-developed construct in research on child development and learning, but has only begun to influence adult learning theory. However, the continued research on teacher personal theorizing and the biographical nature of these theories, point to the critical need recast and restructure the curriculum of teacher education programs to fit more clearly into a constructivist paradigm. To this end, many scholars have suggested that autobiographical exploration become an integral part of teacher education programs (e.g. Butt, Raymond, & Yamagishi, 1988; Olson, 1995). As Olson (1995) explains, the rationale for such explorations rests in a constructivist understanding that, "In order for experience to be educative, we need to be able to move past the taken-for-granted attitude and be awake enough to attend carefully to the meanings we construct from our experiences" (p. 123).

Reflecting on prior experiences in order to make explicit one's tacit assumptions about teaching and learning seems to be crucial to the development of

a more consciously held set of theories that guide instructional practice. The findings of this case study suggest that a potentially rich avenue for biographical reflection include having students focus on significant relationships they had with individual teachers. Like Mr. Franklin, these teachers may serve as role models. In exploring these human aspects of the schooling experience, students may uncover some important ideas about the images they hold of what it means to be a teacher, as well as identifying the specific instructional practices of that teacher.

A second consideration raised by this study as to do with the ethical obligation that teacher education programs have regarding the children and youths in the K-12 classrooms of our future teachers. The findings of this study and the larger body of research on teacher theories makes clear the role that these theories play in teacher's selection of content and instructional activities. As such, they require that we shine a brighter light on the actual effects of these theories on students' access to knowledge and their school achievement. This aspect of teacher theorizing is too often neglected in this strand of research, including this study. However, Mr. Franklin's ability to delineate a strong theory of the aim of education and his use of that theory to set boundaries on his decision-making suggests that perhaps the development of this type of schema is a valuable goal for teacher education.

Unfortunately, the experiences and learning of K-12 students generally remains an unexamined issue with regard to research on teacher learning and teacher education. However, we need to begin linking the potential learning and achievement of K-12 students to the choices we make about teacher education curriculum and

what we want our future teachers to know and be able to do as a result of their program. At the heart of the educational process reside the life options of future generations. The continued development toward a more equitable and just democratic society requires that we individually and collectively undertake that responsibility. Because of the gatekeeping role (Thornton, 1989) teachers play, it is time we turned a more critical eye to our examination of teacher theories and how we support that critical examination in our teacher education programs.

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